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## SEPTEMBER MEETING, 1857.

The Society held their stated monthly meeting on Thursday, Sept. 10, at noon, in the Dowse Library; the President, Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, in the chair.

In the absence of the Librarian, the Recording Secretary announced donations from the Mercantile-Library Association; the State Historical Society of Wisconsin; the Smithsonian Institution; Charles H. Emery, Esq.; B. Homer Dixon, Esq.; Rev. Alonzo H. Quint; Rev. Eleazer Williams; William H. Edwards, Esq.; and from Messrs. Willard and Winthrop, of the Society.

In the absence of the Corresponding Secretary, the Recording Secretary read a communication from the Dorchester Antiquarian and Historical Society, dated July 3, 1857, announcing the appointment of a Committee to keep a meteorological journal, together with a diary of remarkable events, and recommending to the Massachusetts Historical Society the adoption of a similar plan. This communication was referred to the Standing Committee.

Mr. R. FROTHINGHAM read to the Society a petition of Roger Williams to the "honored General Court of Massachusetts Colonie, now assembled in Boston, 1651, humbly praying that he may find civilitie and courtesie, — inoffensively behaving himself, — that he may unoffensively, and without molestation, pass through their jurisdiction, as a stranger, for a night, to the ship in which he proposes to sail for England as a messenger

and agent of the High Court of the Parliament, in the name of his neighbors, in relation to a grant lately obtained by Mr. Coddington for Rhode Island."

Mr. WASHBURN communicated the following paper, narrating a personal incident connected with the local reminiscences of Braddock's campaign:—

The recent perusal of Captain Orme's Journal of Braddock's campaign of 1755, which, with the ample memorial of that disastrous expedition by Winthrop Sargent, has been published within two or three years, will serve as an explanation, and, so far as necessary, an apology, for a brief minute which I have prepared of a personal incident connected with the local reminiscences of that event.

It will be recollected that the point at which the forces were collected, and from which they took their departure for Fort Du Quesne, was Fort Cumberland, at what was then known as Will's Creek, where the present town of Cumberland, in Maryland, is situate.

From thence to the place of their destination the distance was something over an hundred miles. The route of the expedition lay over and along the Alleghany Mountains, through an almost unbroken wilderness, without a single settlement, unless it might have been that of a solitary individual, known as Gist's Plantation.

For about fifty miles, it followed the general direction of what is known as the "National Road," from Cumberland to Wheeling. At that point it crossed the Great Meadows, near the site of an old fortification, called Fort Necessity, the scene of one of the earliest of Washington's military encounters with the French and Indians, and near to which Jumonville, the French commander, fell, and is buried.

At that point Braddock's course turned more to the northwest, passing over the rugged summits of Laurel Hill, which

seem to the traveller, even at this day, to be impassable for an army, with its military stores and baggage.

Braddock left Fort Cumberland on the 10th June, though a part of the troops had been engaged for two days in opening a road for his progress. It was the 25th of June before he reached Fort Necessity, the distance of about fifty miles; and it was not till noon of the 9th of July that he reached the second ford of the Monongahela, near which the fatal battle of that day was fought.

Such was the nature of the country, that, for several days, the army made only from two to four miles' advance in a day; although the heavier stores and baggage of the expedition were transported at a much slower rate by a portion of the troops which were left in charge of these, and never, in fact, reached but a few miles beyond the Great Meadows, already spoken of. This place was called Dunbar's Camp; and to this point, though forty miles from the scene of the action, the troops which remained after the battle fled in the greatest terror and confusion. Instead of making a stand here, as they could have done with entire safety, or even attempting to withdraw the military stores, of which they had large quantities, they buried or destroyed the principal part of these to prevent their falling into the enemies' hands, and took up a hurried march for Will's Creek.

Braddock, who had been fatally wounded in the battle, but was still living, was borne by his men over the same track which he had passed so shortly previous in all the imposing array of a well-appointed military force.

On the night of the 13th, four days after the battle, he died, and was buried in the middle of the trail made by the army, in order to obliterate every trace of his grave by the tracks of the men and carriages passing over it.

The place of his burial was known to be at or near the Great Meadows; but its precise locality was first ascertained about 1823, while the workmen were engaged in constructing

the National Road, close by which his remains were found reposing.

But to the incident to which I alluded, which, as I remarked, was recalled by reading the work of Mr. Sargent.

I left Cumberland on the evening of the 13th July, 1841, by stage for Wheeling. At a late breakfast-hour the next morning, we found ourselves at the door of a hotel at Fayette Springs, fifty-three miles from Cumberland, and nine miles from Union Town, which lies at the western foot of the mountains. A mile or two before reaching this place, we had crossed a little stream, which the driver informed us was called "Braddock's Run;" and shortly after passed a large tree, growing close to the highway, on which a small board was nailed, having an inscription upon it, "Braddock's Grave," and were told that his remains were found buried near that spot.

On entering the bar-room, I observed a large quantity of shot and shells of various sizes in one corner of the room, incrustated with a black substance like gunpowder, and, though without any mark of rust upon them, showing that they were not of recent manufacture.

So singular a sight, in such a place, led me to inquire, of a very intelligent-looking gentleman standing near them, the occasion of such a collection of warlike stores in such a retired and peaceful neighborhood.

He replied, that the place where we were standing was near the track of Braddock's army; that the mountain which we could see to the right of us, though still covered with the native forest, and so steep and rugged, had to be surmounted by him and his army; that, though the traces of his march were principally obliterated, it had always been understood, that, at a place a few miles from where we then were, within the forest, upon that mountain, he had buried a quantity of ammunition and stores; and it had been proposed, by several gentlemen interested in this historical tradition, to visit the spot, and ascertain, by excavation, its truth; that, on the

4th of July just past, they had repaired to the locality of the supposed buried stores, and, upon digging a few feet below the surface, they brought to light large quantities of such material as I saw before me; and a part of them had been left at the hotel, in the state in which they were found.

The place where these were discovered was about two miles from the hotel, at what had been called Dunbar's Camp, and was the extreme point to which that part of the army which remained with Colonel Dunbar advanced, and at which they received the few fugitive remains of Braddock's force which had escaped from the field of his discomfiture and defeat.

To reach the scene of the battle by this route, some of the sharpest and loftiest summits of the Laurel Ridge had to be surmounted, in which the artillery and baggage were drawn up with infinite labor, and let down upon the opposite side by means of blocks and tackle. And I may repeat, that, even at this day, one cannot look at the mountains, and this in particular, over which these troops had made their way, without astonishment and almost incredulity. They remind one of the march of Suwarrow through the mountains of Switzerland.

Since the time of which I have been speaking, pains have been taken to trace the course of Braddock's army, which has been done with success; and a plan of it accompanies the work of Mr. Sargent.

The associations which were irresistibly awakened by the objects before me, of that memorable campaign and its actors, led me to make inquiries respecting the localities around us, and how far they were identified with the early warlike expeditions which had been sent out from the settlements by the way of Will's Creek; and I found, in the gentleman with whom I was conversing, one who was apparently entirely familiar with the subject, and who readily communicated the information I desired.

Pointing to an open, level area, near which we were standing, he said, "That is the Great Meadows, the scene of General Washington's first military encounter with the enemy in 1754; there, about half a mile from us, stood Fort Necessity; and at about two miles from here, in that direction, is Jumonville's grave, whose death led to so much unjust remark against Washington by the French writers of that day; and there, close by the side of the road over which you passed, and near the large tree with 'Braddock's Grave' upon it, is the spot where his remains were found when the National Road was constructed."

"But how," said I, "could it have been known, after such a lapse of years, where he was buried, if, as is said, the spot was carefully concealed at first, and no monument had ever marked it afterwards?"

"I can tell you," said he; "for I was myself present when the discovery was made. There was a singular old man whom I knew in my younger days, whose home was up in the mountains, from which he occasionally emerged to visit the settlements. His name was Faucit, and he was known by everybody as 'Whistling Tom,' — one of that class which has entirely disappeared, whose pioneer life and habits assimilated him to the natives, with whom he was so much associated in his early days.

"He always insisted that he had himself fired the shot which fatally wounded Braddock; that he had belonged to the Provincial troops, and had been present at his burial, and could point out the spot where he lay. He described, too, the manner in which the troops, with the train of wagons, were made to pass over the grave, which was dug in the middle of the road along which they were retreating, in order to obliterate the traces of his burial-place.

"Nobody, however, heeded this statement sufficiently to make any search for his remains, until one day, while the workmen were engaged in excavating the earth in construct-

ing the National Road, Whistling Tom, then a very old man, came along by where they were at work, and, stopping, told them they were then within a few feet of where Braddock was buried, and, if they would dig at a spot which he pointed out with his cane, they would find his bones.

“They were induced to make the experiment, and, in a few minutes, threw out portions of the remains of a human body, with enough of remnants of military trappings mingled with them to render the information of the old pioneer satisfactory and reliable. The only indication of the spot now is the inscription upon the tree near it which I have mentioned.”

Of the truth of the statement which this old soldier had uniformly persisted in making, nothing, probably, can ever be known beyond the balancing of probabilities. Mr. Sargent treats it as entitled to no credit, and as akin to the tales of Mandeville or Pinto, if, indeed, any historian since Herodotus can appease an appetite for the marvellous that could take in such a narrative.

But that such was his statement, there can be no doubt; and that there was a tradition to the same effect prevailing many years since in the western part of Pennsylvania, we are assured by Mr. Sparks, in his notice of Braddock's defeat; and it found a place in Watson's “Annals of Philadelphia,” and in the Appendix to Gordon's “History of Pennsylvania.”

But whether the statement were true or otherwise, the fact was not without interest, that such a tradition prevailed, and that here stood a living witness, who had personally known one of the actors, at least, in the events of that fatal day, and who had, without doubt, assisted in the burial of Braddock.

There was enough in the scene and its associations to impress any mind deeply, without borrowing any thing from doubtful tradition. There was the track he had pursued through an unbroken wilderness, surrounded by foes making the day as well as the night hideous with their yells and their



savage mode of warfare ; and that track now forming a national highway, along which the traveller to or from the now thronged cities of that region, which was then without an inhabitant, found one of the many avenues of trade and intercourse which bind together the crowded East and the teeming West.

Before me lay exhumed from a sleep of more than eighty years a part of that very material of war which one of the great nations of the Old World had sent here, at so much cost of life and treasure, to enable them to maintain a doubtful and divided empire, against the armies of another European State, over the waters and woods and wild Indian hunting-grounds of the Ohio and its tributaries. And hard by was the undistinguished grave of one, who, after having fought bravely at Fontenoy and Culloden, and after nearly fifty years of honorable service in England, Scotland, and the Low Countries, had risen to the rank of major-general in the British army ; had been selected for his courage and military skill and experience to lead an expedition adequate to expel the French armies from their fastnesses beyond the Alleghanies ; and had there sought, as it were, to hide in the lonely fastness of this mountain-valley the memory of his name and his disgraceful defeat.

But, hidden and unknown as was that spot till an entire generation had passed away, the name of the unfortunate leader of that expedition, and the melancholy fate of his army on the banks of the Monongahela, were repeated from sire to son, and kept in fresh remembrance wherever the white man's foot had penetrated.

The result of that battle seemed disastrous to the feeble colonists of that day ; but its consequences were little understood. The Provincials saw themselves despised, and their system of tactics and discipline made the subjects of ridicule, by the troops of the mother country, trained in the school of the Coldstreams, under Marlborough and Cumberland : but,

when they saw all this boast and pretension humbled and crushed in an ignominious contest with a foe contemptible in numbers and devoid of discipline, the prestige of the name lost much of its charm ; and the subsequent part which the Provincials took with the royal troops in the war with the French and Indians prepared them still more to stand up with unwavering ranks, when arrayed against each other in the battles of the Revolution.

But I again confess, that I owe an apology for venturing upon this subject, and still more for the length to which I have suffered it to extend.

The revival of emotions I felt at witnessing what I have attempted to describe, by glancing over the work of Mr. Sargent, suggested the theme of this article ; and I have been the more encouraged to pursue it, from knowing, as I do, that the subject has not lost its interest after the lapse of more than an hundred years.

Mr. FELTON laid before the Society a programme of the course of instruction in the University of Athens, accompanying and illustrating it with interesting remarks.

Dr. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES was unanimously elected a Resident Member of the Society.

Dr. E. B. O'CALLAGHAN, of Albany, N.Y. ; BUCKINGHAM SMITH, Esq., of Florida ; and BENJAMIN F. FRENCH, Esq., of New Orleans, — were elected Corresponding Members.

Mr. AMES presented a manuscript original record of the engagement of the Pocasset purchasers, with an autograph of Captain Benjamin Church, the famous Indian warrior.

The following is a copy of this interesting relic : —

Wee whose names are vnder writen the Purchaser of the Lands of Pocassett & places adjacent Doe ingage our selves to the Honoured Court of Newplimouth that we will from time to time use our utmost Indeavour for the well setleing of the s<sup>d</sup> Plantation & in order thereunto will be carefull to setle such Persons theron as shall be to the acceptance of this Gouvernment & that shall Promote the Worship of God & will joine with Succonitt Proprieter in the Calling of A Gospell Mineter & for his incoragment as to his outward subsistance will settle him one the most Conveneont Place we can to accomidate both Plantations & give to the first Mineter that shall settle amongst us soe much of our land as Succonitt shall also giue beside a proportionat part of our land we will lay out for the Ministry in succession & al[so] give such due incoragment as to his Maintenance as our abillityes & his nesity may call for Desireing of this Court to giue such due Incoragmtt to the s<sup>d</sup> newplantaton as may be for the well setlemtt of the s<sup>d</sup> Place.

*Testis*

JOHN FF [torn]  
DANIEL SMITH

EDWARD O GRAYS mark  
NATHANIEL THOMAS  
BENJAMIN CHURCH  
CHRISTOPHER ALMY  
JOB ALMY.  
THOMAS WAIT  
DANIEL q WILCOKS marke  
WILLIAM X MANCHETER, his marke.

This writing is Recorded according to order p<sup>r</sup> Nathaniel Morton Secretary to the Court for the Jurisdiction of New Plymouth see booke of orders and passages of the Court. March Court Ann<sup>o</sup> 1679.80.